

THROUGH A MONOCLE

THE COMMON SENSE OF A CENSUS.

THERE is bound to be a lot of discussion this year over the taking of the census. The cities are naturally the first from which we get complaints; and complaints in plenty have come in already that people by the household, by the apartment house and by the ward have been missed in the count. If the country enumerators have been no more successful than those in the cities, the census authorities are in for a serious time over their work this summer. But it is altogether probable that the count in the country has been more careful. It is harder to miss a farm house than a city apartment; and tillers of the soil are more stationary than city chaps who flit from job to job and from one rented house to another.

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A CENSUS is an exceedingly important thing. Too many of us, I am afraid, have been more inclined to dodge the bother of submitting to the enumerator's catechism than to take any real trouble to see that we and our families are counted. Yet the nation suffers if the census be inaccurate, and it suffers twice if it be also discredited. It is, in short, a mild form of patriotic duty to get properly into the census. For the next decade, the count which is now being taken will be the authoritative statement of the standing of Canada. It will tell the world not only how many people we have, but how prosperous they are, what callings they follow, what is the size of the average family, how wages run in the different industries, what farms are worth, and all sorts of other things from which home-seekers and investment-hunters will deduce whether or not Canada is the land they are looking for. All other statements of our growth and promise are looked upon as "estimates," and are discounted as a trifle rosy; but the Federal census is a cold and mechanical collection of facts.

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ONE trouble with the census this year was undoubtedly the feeling that it was a trifle "personal," if not impertinent. It wanted "to know, you know," a great deal which some people felt was none of the enumerator's business. For instance, when you ask a man to put a price on his property, he feels that you have confronted him with a delicate question which it is hardly fair for the State to compel him to answer. He naturally wants to know which price you desire—the price he would like to sell at, or the price he would like to be taxed on. He doesn't want to underestimate his holdings; and he doesn't want to be over-taxed on them. Moreover, his answer is not likely to be very valuable, taking all of "him" together. Some will be optimistic and others will be pessimistic; and others, again, will simply be ignorant; and others, once more, may possibly lie. No city assessor thinks of taking any man's estimate of his property as official; and why should a Dominion enumerator be more gullible

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THIS is one question which might have been dropped with a great saving of time, temper and suspicion. The facts sought could have been secured much more accurately and probably quite as expeditiously in another way. Each citizen could have been asked for a list of his properties; and then the assessment rolls could be consulted for the values. These values are universally too low; but a uniform percentage of augmentation could have been agreed upon. Then we should have had something worth while. The insurance question excited some opposition, too. Still it is a little hard to see why. No man is assessed on his insurance; and no man ever wants to "sell" his insurance at a higher price than he paid for it. It is equally hard, however, to think why the Government wanted so badly to know. What does the insurance test show? It may be interesting; but is it important? Would it not be about as much in the public interest to ascertain how many suits of clothes a man uses in a year, or whether he is a Higher or a Broader Critic?

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THERE is no use of objecting to a religious census in such a community as we have in Canada. But, of course, we all know that it is not a census of religion. The Angel Gabriel—or whichever Angel is keeping track of us religiously—would never, never recognize the figures. He would exclaim at once that they were shamefully

"padded"—that there were not as many Christians of all colours in Canada as the Government reported as belonging to one particular shade. We are all religious when the census man comes round; but, if he took his count at the church door, it might be different. I am not so sure either that the racial census is "good business." Why should we go out of our way to label ourselves as of different races? Why not put us all down as Canadians; and then let us all try to live up to that high destiny? There are enough mischief-makers reminding us that we are "different," without the Government taking a hand.

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THERE has been some criticism of the intelligence of the enumerators. They were probably as intelligent as we have any right to expect to get under the "patronage" system. If there was any lack of intelligence displayed, it was by ourselves in permitting this same "patronage" system to select all our public servants for us. Better

work could have been done, I have no doubt, if the task had been left to the High School boys of the country who would have been glad to do it at half the rate paid these party "hangers-on." As a vacation job for college boys who are working their way through their course, it would have been ideal. But High School boys have no votes; and College boys are too high-spirited to be bought by such means. As long as we continue to let the politicians bribe us with our own money, and thank them for it, we will pay the price; and no small part of the price is an inefficient service.

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AFTER all, is not the English system of census-taking the best? There they count the people all in one day; and the only test is how many have slept in the house the night before. This has not as many frills as we put on a census—does not gather as much misinformation—but it does make an accurate count. If taken at the right season of the year when all the people are likely to be at home, it provides a good idea of the population—and provides it quickly. Then if we must know how many have gold-filling in their teeth, or what proportion of us think that it was an apple that led to the downfall of Eve, we could learn it afterward.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

FESTIVAL OF THE ORANGE LILY



Interested Orangemen at Exhibition Park, Toronto, listening to the speeches of Mr. Robert Sellar, editor of the *Huntingdon Gleaner*, Mr. W. D. McPherson, M.P.P., and Hon. Dr. Pyne, Minister of Education for Ontario.



Pretty little Orange Lilies running a race between the speeches.